



# BURNING ISSUES

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*Burning Issues* is published by the Maricopa County Department of Environmental Services to inform and educate the residents of Maricopa County about the Residential Woodburning Restriction Ordinance. Suggestions or questions are welcome and should be directed to: Maricopa County Environmental Services Department, Air Quality Division, 1001 N. Central, Suite 201, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

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## RESIDENTIAL WOODBURNING ORDINANCE

Maricopa County continues to combat three major air pollutants:

- Carbon Monoxide (CO)
- Particulates (PM10)
- Ozone (O3)

The Residential Woodburning Restriction Ordinance is a compliance measure of the Clean Air Act, aimed at reducing the wintertime pollutants CO and PM10.

The winter pollution season runs from October 1 through the end of February each year, with the height of the season being from mid-November to mid-January.

During the winter season, the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department (MCESD) will issue a High Air Pollution Advisory (HPA) when CO and/or PM10 concentrations get close to unhealthy levels.

During HPAs, residents must refrain from using all non-approved wood burning devices. People are also advised to limit automobile use and other pollution generating devices and curtail intense outdoor exercise. Those with breathing problems should minimize exposure to outdoor air.

Advisories will be issued for a 24-hour period, from 10 a.m. to 10 a.m. the following day.



High Pollution Advisory

Residents who violate the ordinance may be issued a warning for the first offense, get a \$50 fine for a second, and a \$100 fine for any other within one year.

Pellet stoves and any other wood stoves that meet EPA standards can be used during the restricted burn period. However, you must register your device with MCESD.

While vehicles and industries play a large role in producing air pollution, wood burning can produce up to 40 percent of pollution in a neighborhood (ADEQ study). This is due to an air inversion "ceiling." This ceiling traps pollutants in the valley close to the ground and prevents them from blowing

away naturally. And, even though folks have burned wood for years, the number of cars, wood stoves, and fireplaces have simply outgrown the airshed's ability to clean itself.

Wood smoke may cause health problems when the tiny particles get inhaled deep in the lungs and can't escape. Young children, the elderly, and people with breathing problems are especially at risk, because they don't have enough lung capacity to overcome the pollution. These individuals may experience a variety of symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest pain, with increased difficulty performing everyday activities involving physical exertion.

Wood smoke may lower your resistance to infections like pneumonia, and it aggravates bronchitis, asthma, emphysema, and similar diseases in people of all ages. Healthy adults may experience eye, nose, and throat irritation.

Contact your physician about health effects.

## For More Information

- Woodburning Exemptions - (602) 506-6700
- Environmental Complaint Hotline - (602) 506-6616
- High Air Pollution Advisory Hotline - (602) 506-6400
- Woodburning information and air quality forecasts – [www.maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc).
- Hourly pollution levels - (602) 420-9458
- American Lung Association of Arizona - (602) 258-7505
- Recycling and other environmental information at Earth's 911 – 1-800-CLEANUP or [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org).

## Sources of Air Pollution

The most common sources of the three major pollutants in Maricopa County are:

- Motor vehicle travel.
- Emissions from other fossil fuel burning, such as incinerators, generators, small gas-powered equipment, and wood-burning fireplaces.
- Industrial and household use of commercial products that contain volatile organic compounds.

## Exemptions

Homeowners will need to submit an application to renew their fireplace exemption. To see if you qualify for an exemption, call MCESD at (602) 506-6700.

## Pollutant Update

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reclassified Maricopa County to a serious non-attainment area in 1996.

The plans to reduce CO include transportation control strategies and measures to offset growth in emissions due to increased vehicle miles traveled.

With the Maricopa County Trip Reduction Program (TRP), businesses with 50 or more employees have several options to encourage employees to reduce their vehicle travel. For details, call TRP at (602) 506-6750.

Strategies to reduce PM-10 include paving dirt roads, strengthening fugitive dust control programs, and utilizing PM-10 efficient street sweepers.

For more information about CO and PM-10 pollution, go to [www.maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc).


## Clean Burning Tips

To reduce the amount of pollution woodburning creates, follow these simple steps.

- Don't burn firewood or manufactured logs in wood stoves or fireplaces during a High Air Pollution Advisory.
- Burn only dry wood.
- Build small, hot fires.
- Never burn garbage, wrapping paper, or painted or chemically treated wood.

- Have your chimney inspected and swept by a professional chimney sweep.
- Give your fire a generous air supply.
- Watch your chimney for heavy smoke - this means that your wood is not burning efficiently.

## Tips To Reduce Air Pollution

- Combine errands and shop with a neighbor during the holidays.
- Take the bus. Call (602) 253-5000 for schedules and locations of park-and-ride lots. 
- Convert your wood burning fireplace to gas or electric.
- Turn off your car if you foresee having to idle more than one minute.
- Make sure your tires are properly inflated.
- Avoid using gas powered lawn equipment.
- Stagger work schedules and drive during off-peak hours.
- Form a carpool or vanpool by calling (602) 262-RIDE or visit the online rideshare matching system at [www.sharetheride.com](http://www.sharetheride.com).
- Keep your car tuned. 